

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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“Mohamed Atta Should Not Be Given Back His Box Cutters,” says Rep. Markey

Washington, DC: Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior Democrat on the House committee on Homeland Security, today wrote a strongly-worded letter to Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff disagreeing with a recommendation by staff of the Transportation Security Administration to relax passenger screening at our nation’s airports with regard to knives, ice pick and razor blades.

“As one who attended several funerals of the thousands of families devastated by the horror of September 11th, 2001,” said Rep. Markey, “I strongly disagree that now is the time to allow terrorists like Mohamed Atta and his sleeper cells to fly with knives, ice picks or razor blades.

“This is the equivalent of handing back the box cutters to the 9/11 hijackers.”

Markey’s letter notes that “if the trade-off is between the inconvenience of being screened for these potential weapons versus the inconvenience of trying to disarm suicidal terrorists in the aisles of a 747 in flight, I am certain that the public would prefer screening.”

The Association of Flight Attendants has also objected to the same provision that sparked Markey’s letter.

Rep. Markey has been the foremost proponent of inspecting cargo, particularly when it is placed in the cargo hold of passenger planes. His letter to Chertoff made reference to that debate as well, noting that this recommendation to relax inspections of passengers comes on top of a policy of leaving cargo completely uninspected. “The public is already very vulnerable due to your Department’s continuing refusal to require the inspection of the cargo routinely loaded onto passenger planes,” Markey noted. “Let’s not increase that vulnerability by allowing weapons into the passenger cabin.”

For a copy of the Markey letter to Secretary Chertoff, go to www.house.gov/markey.

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